

KPS CONSULTING

“Building an Access Bridge in Technology and Telecommunications”

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October 15, 2003

Marlene Dortch
Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554

Re: **Ex Parte Presentation**
CC Docket No. 98-67, CG Docket No. 03-123

Dear Ms. Dortch:

On October 14, 2003, Ben Soukup, Mark Seeger, Ann Marie Mickelson, Pat Reiter Mark Seeger, and the undersigned, on behalf of Communication Service for the Deaf, Inc. (CSD), met with Margaret Egler, Tom Chandler, Gregory Hlibok, Cheryl King, Sean O'More, and Janet Sievert of the FCC's Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau (CGB) to discuss the following issues:

Legal Interpreting Petition – CSD discussed the petition that it filed on June 12, 2003, in which it had urged the FCC to grant a waiver of the obligation to handle video relay service (VRS) calls involving legal proceedings. CSD made the point that consumers need the legal protections guaranteed by state statutes that require credentialing of interpreters for these types of interpreting assignments. CSD expressed the concern that allowing these calls to be handled through VRS could compromise the rights of deaf consumers.

VRS Rate – CSD discussed the impact of CGB's Order of June 30, 2003, which cut the rate for VRS from the \$14.023 per minute recommended by the TRS fund administrator to an interim \$7.75 per minute. CSD discussed and distributed a fact sheet documenting the effects that this Order has had on users, interpreters and VRS providers. The fact sheet is attached herein. Upon CGB's request, CSD will be forwarding confidential information about average VRS call lengths and CSD's costs for interpreters.

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VRS Provider Marketing Practices – CSD asked the FCC to clarify whether certain marketing practices by other VRS providers have been sanctioned or otherwise approved by the FCC. Specifically, CSD raised concerns about marketing practices that use incentives of free video equipment or reduced broadband rates to encourage consumers to make video relay calls. CSD requested that the FCC make a public determination about these marketing practices as soon as possible.

Waiver Extensions – CSD noted that it supports the VRS waiver requests made by Hands On and Hamilton, and will be soon be filing comments in support of those waivers. However, CSD noted that there appears to be confusion about whether or not VRS providers are now eligible to receive reimbursement for non-shared ASL to Spanish language translation over VRS. CSD mentioned an e-mail sent by the National Exchange Carriers Association which had indicated that reimbursement was not available for this service, and will be forwarding that e-mail to CGB's staff.

This letter is being filed electronically.

Sincerely,

Karen Peltz Strauss

Karen Peltz Strauss
Attorney for CSD

cc: Margaret Egler
Tom Chandler